The
Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

PRICE TWOPENCE
3s. per annum post free

No. 178. APRIL, 1922

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N.B.—All Communications should reach the Editor, Ardeevin, Cadogan Park, Belfast, not later than the 16th of the month preceding publication.

Light and Life.

That these represent a co-partnership of far-reaching importance is clearly evident. It is being demonstrated in unmistakable manner at the present time. The season of Lent, when the longer days unfold and earth rejoices in the growing power of the sunlight, is pre-eminently the period of awakening life. Nature has ended her season of apparent rest and stagnation, and is beginning once again her pageant of beauty. The hedgerows show a glimmer of green, the sheen of the grass reflects the bright rays of sunlight, the vari-coloured buds of the trees give promise of gracious unfolding. The life drama of abounding Nature is again presented for our appreciation, and every seeing eye rejoices in the spectacle of natural beauty and symmetry.

But what is being displayed to outward vision is but a symbol and suggestion of what is taking place in the life of the spirit. The sure agency of light, shining more and more to the perfect day, is at work in human progress, and is its measure and its meaning. In the suggestive record of Genesis the divine fiat went forth: "Let there be light. And there was light." But with light came the development of life. Here Genesis and science were at one. Both see in the fitting correlation of light and life the promise and the potency of all that is to be.

How more clearly is it revealed when we pass from the far-off primitive promise to its prime spiritual fulfilment! The season of Lent ends in the Festival of Easter. That which was but the prelude and the spiritual preparation finds its triumphant consummation in the Christ of Calvary. In the words of one New Testament writer, it "hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the Gospel." Could any interpretation of Christ and his gospel be more seasonable or more suggestive? In Nature, life is being brought to light,—is being made more outwardly manifest in many varied forms of beauty. In man, the life of the spirit, if patterned after that of Christ, is being brought to light by the Gospel and its principles of power and beauty. The Easter revelation, which all churches bearing the Christian name commemorate, is in reality a completion and also a promise. In Christ is seen the process completed. Growing during the silent years in wisdom and in stature, it is his death and his overcoming of death which reveals the mystery and manifests the power of spiritual achievement. Yet in this he is the first-born of many brethren. If mankind has now its Lent, is there not the hope of its Easter, and the glad presage of its spiritual victory!

Notes of the Month.

In consequence of the destructive fire in Mr. John Adams' printing office, the preparations made for the early publication of this issue were completely upset, and the consequent delay made unavoidable.

* *

We would now make more particular reference to the Belfast Musical Festival arranged for this month, and at the same time correct a mistake which appeared in last month's notice. The Festival is to be held on a Saturday, not on a Sunday as we earlier stated, the chosen day being April 22nd. Sunday would make it impossible for the Comber and Holywood churches and schools to take part, as they are desirous of doing. They will contribute groups of choristers who, together with those representing the Belfast churches and schools, will form a United Choir and give two performances of the selected hymns and anthems in the First Church, Belfast, on the afternoon and evening of Saturday, April 22nd. By means of careful rehearsing, first in the local centres, and then at general rehearsals conducted by the Rev. M. Watkins, very good musical results are being realised, and we have every confidence that these will be surpassed at the Festival itself. As the consequent benefit is bound to be felt by a larger area even than that represented we appeal for a very hearty and widespread support of the Festival. There should be very good attendances to enjoy the music and encourage the promoters of, and participants in, a most promising venture.

* *

To another event particularly bearing upon the Sunday Schools and their work we are asked to draw attention. This is the Summer School for Sunday School Teachers which is to be held in Manchester College, Oxford, from August 3rd to August 12th. Already nine of such gatherings have taken place and those privileged to attend have spoken in the highest terms of the help and inspiration afforded. The opportunity of hearing addresses from specialists, not to speak of the friendly conference and intercourse with those who in many districts are doing like work, are really invaluable to the conscientious teacher. Anyone interested in the Summer School may obtain a detailed prospectus of its proceedings on application to the Hon. Secretary of the Sunday School Association, Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, London, W.C.2. It is under the auspices of that Association, and with the kind permission of the authorities at Manchester College, that the Summer School will be held for the tenth time.

* *

This year it has been arranged to hold the Annual Meeting of the Non-Subscribing Association in April instead of June, as was the rule heretofore. By so doing it is hoped to avoid the congestion incidental to the formal grouping together of many gatherings in two over-crowded days, thus limiting arbitrarily the time needful for the transaction of necessary business, not to speak of the holding of the Annual Lecture and Service associated with the General Synod. The proceedings of the latter will still fall in the third week in June, and we are glad to learn that Rev. Nicol Cross, M.A., has accepted the invitation to deliver the Annual Lecture. We would appeal to our readers to ensure success for this decided separation of the Association gatherings, and ask them to do their best to attend the same in the First Church on Wednesday, April 19th.

* *

As we write these notes sad intimation comes to us of the death of a prominent member of our community, Mr. James Davidson. It is only a short time ago that his brother, Sir Samuel C. Davidson, ended his strenuous and distinguished career, and now the members of the same family circle have to mourn another great loss. We would tender to them our heartfelt sympathy in their bereavement. As for ourselves, we recognise all too plainly the loss of a very devoted member of our household of faith.

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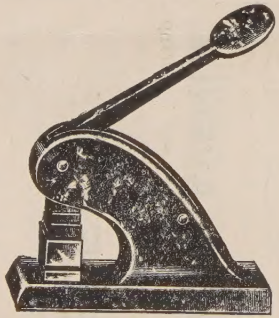

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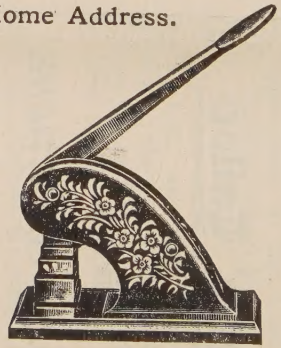

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Young People's Page.

SPRING SONGS.

For some weeks the birds have again given unmistakable welcome to spring. They are ever its faithful heralds. No sooner do the days begin to lengthen than their joyous notes form a fitting accompaniment and constitute a prelude of the better and brighter days to be. Blackbird and thrush, robin and finch, in varied modes and measures make spring their gladsome refrain. Even the rooks, not richly endowed as songsters, chant a chorus of approval.

It would be strange if the reflective and observant reason of men made no response where mere instinct is so vocal. But what the birds do for nature the poets perform on behalf of mankind. They greet the coming spring with song and chorus. In ancient as in modern times this season of the year supplies the theme and the motive. Any collection of lyrical verse would be almost worthless if we took therefrom the songs which recount the delights of springtime. The latter is essentially the source of gladness and hope, pointing forward to a still richer fulfilment of the promise of life.

Among the British poets who have associated springtime and song none should be better beloved of young people than Robert Louis Stevenson. In a sense he was like Peter Pan—he never grew up, but remained not only a lover of the little ones, but also maintained his own youngness of spirit. In many of his writings, and particularly in "A Child's Garland of Verses," he is indebted to the spring for the gaiety and glory of his singing. One of his poems, entitled "My Grenadier," tells how the latter owed much to Nature and its spring setting:

"He has lived, a little thing,
In the grassy woods of spring;
Done, if he could tell me true,
Just as I should like to do.

He has seen the starry hours
And the springing of the flowers;
And the fairy things that pass
In the forests of the grass."

The impulse to sing in the springtime is especially characteristic.

Another thought of the same writer is that of Nature's protective care of the young, the sympathy which she seems to show for the forsaken and forlorn. Thus, in "Prince Otto," Stevenson tells a delightful story of a Princess who is discrowned and compelled to wander alone by night in the forest. But Nature by her very influence banishes the fear which the circumstances might otherwise prompt:

"The early evening had fallen chill, but the night was now temperate; out of the recesses of the wood there came mild airs as from a deep and peaceful breathing; and the dew was heavy on the grass and the tight-shut daisies. This was the girl's first night under the naked heaven; and now that her fears were overpast, she was touched to the soul by its serene amenity and peace. Kindly the host of heaven blinked down upon that wandering Princess; and the honest brook had no words but to encourage her.

"At last she began to be aware of a wonderful revolution, compared to which the fire of Mittwalden Palace was but a crack and flash of a percussion-cap. The countenance with the the pines regarded her began insensibly to change; the grass too, short as it was, and the whole winding staircase of the brook's course, began to wear a solemn freshness of appearance. And this slow transfiguration reached her heart, and played upon it, and transpierced it with a serious thrill. She looked all about; the whole face of nature looked back, brimful of meaning, finger on lip, leaking its glad secret. She looked up. Heaven was almost emptied of stars. Such as still lingered shone with a changed and waning brightness, and began to faint in their stations. And the colour of the sky was the most wonderful; for the rich blue of the night had now melted and softened and brightened; and there had succeeded in its place a hue that has no name, and that is never seen but as the herald of morn. 'O!' she cried, joy catching at her voice, 'O! it is the dawn!'"

Temperance Notes.

We were pleased to see an appreciation of the appearance of "Temperance Notes," and thank "T.T." for his thoughtful article. Hitherto our Notes have referred mainly to Band of Hope work; which is, of course, with the children. Children do not need telling what to avoid, so much as what to *do* and at what to *aim*. Undoubtedly frequent and direct Temperance instruction is essential. I think "T.T.'s" notes were needed in case others should have been misled by the "optimistic note" in our article, as he apparently was.

In our great desire to awaken a national conscience against the Drink Traffic one of the greatest obstacles in the way, next to the vested interests, is the moderate drinker. Besides having such confidence in himself he has such a deep love for personal liberty that he attacks the "intemperate methods" of Temperance workers. But surely the moderate drinker is not honest with himself, or he would realise the infinitesimal good from his occasional glass compared with the enormous, the incalculable, evil that is undoubtedly directly associated with the traffic. Why have anything at all to do with such a stuff when you know what harm is done by it? Is it not beside the point that it *may* not do *you* harm? Why encourage the sale of it at all?

Last year £402,700,000 was spent on intoxicating liquor in the United Kingdom (£30,200,000 in Ireland) which is £14 14s per adult of 21 years and upwards (including abstainers). Yet all shopkeepers and others are telling you what little money is circulating these days! Of this sum about £195,000,000 goes to the Treasury in taxation. And every bit of this and more is required to keep up the gaols, workhouses, asylums, and attendant staffs attempting to cure or curb the ills and evils caused by the drink. It is interesting to note that after the Trade have paid away this enormous sum to the State, they still retain for themselves an amount exceeding three times that which the nation spends on education.

We note that our Minister for Labour replying in the Northern Parliament, promised early attention to Temperance legislation after their Government had surmounted the great difficulties before it in establishing itself and attending the urgent and terrible problems of the moment. Therefore we must wait patiently. We know he and others in the House have the matter at heart; but Drink and Strife are close allies, as are also Sobriety and Peace.

There is one reform that must come. We must be able of ourselves to say whether or not we want as many or any licences granted in our particular district. Even liberty-loving subjects can hardly object to Local Option.

P. GODDING.

Report.

Ballyclare.—On Wednesday, February 15th, the Annual Congregational Meeting, Sunday School Social, and Prize Distribution was held in connection with the above church. After an excellent tea dispensed by the ladies of the congregation, the affairs and finances of the church were dealt with. The Treasurer's Report showed a satisfactory year's working and revealed a very creditable balance in hand. The appointment of Officers followed, Mr. Gillespie and Mr. Bingham being re-elected Treasurer and Secretary respectively. On the conclusion of the business meeting, Book Prizes were awarded to the successful scholars (27 being eligible), kindly presented by Miss Jeanie Nelson. The average individual attendance for the year was very high, while James Laird, Robert John Harson, Lily Gillespie and Abigail M'Clean had an unbroken attendance. An admirable musical programme consisting of Songs, Recitations, Pianoforte Solos and Dualogues, rendered by members of the Choir and Sunday School brought to a close a very happy and enjoyable evening.

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Obituary.

MR. JAMES DAVIDSON.

We regret to announce the death of Mr. James Davidson. He caught a chill about the middle of February, and this was followed by an attack of influenza, the effects of which he was unable to shake off. His great age—he was in his 85th year—militated against his chances of recovery, and the end came on March 21st, at his residence, Linwood, Donaghadee.

Mr. Davidson might justly be called the doyen of the chase in the North of Ireland. Born at Ballymechan on the 22nd May, 1837, he began his hunting career as a boy during the mastership of Mr. Nugent, while living in Newton House in County Meath. Returning to his native County Down in 1850 he entered whole-heartedly into the sport, and became known as one of the most daring riders in the country. He did not by any means restrict himself to this one sport, and was almost as well known in cricket and polo circles. When the business of a tea planter took him to India in 1863 Mr. Davidson kept up his interest in sport, and it was indirectly through his instrumentality that the game of polo was introduced to Calcutta, and afterwards into England and Ireland. A natural lover of horses, he became, in 1895, hon. secretary to the County Down Committee under the Royal Dublin Society's horse-breeding scheme, and was largely responsible for the organisation of the popular Comber point-to-point meeting.

In 1893 as a well-deserved tribute to his worth and to his efforts to promote hunting, Mr. Davidson was presented with a full-length portrait of himself in hunting costume, a canteen of silver, and a gold watch and chain. He was again honoured on the attainment of his 75th birthday, when he was made the recipient of an address and a cheque, subscribed for by over 300 friends and admirers. Widely as he was famed for his own achievements in sport, he was perhaps even more extensively known by the appropriate *nom de plume* of "Nimrod," under which pseudonym he contributed racy articles to the Press for a period of over sixty years. He was almost as expert with his pen as in the handling of a horse when riding across country, and his literary work commanded a very wide circle of readers. His keen observation gave a vitality and an interest to all he wrote, whether it was on hunting or on kindred subjects. His activity was also conspicuous in his business life, where he was one of the principals of the milling firm of J. & J. Davidson. After the death of his brother, Mr. John Davidson, J.P., he retired from the business, but he could not remain idle, and a few years later he took up an insurance and commission agency. He was, of course, a veteran, but almost to the last he retained the spirit of youth, and no one seeing him walking along the street with the brisk step that was characteristic of him would have thought that he was an octogenarian. Time dealt gently with him, for it did not deprive him of his zest in life, nor did it weaken either his mental or physical faculties. He was a brother of Sir Samuel Davidson, founder of the Sirocco Engineering Works, who died last year. Mr. Davidson was twice married, and he is survived by his second wife, two sons, and two daughters.

Mr. Davidson was a devoted member of our religious community, and when in town regularly attended the services at the First Church, Rosemary Street, of which congregation he had been for many years a member. In spite of his funeral on March 23rd being private, a number of representative persons attended to show their respect for their esteemed friend. The service in the house at Donaghadee was conducted by the Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., assisted by the Rev. Mr. Willis, Rector of Donaghadee; while the former was responsible for the ceremony at the graveside in the City Cemetery. His kindly and energetic personality will be greatly missed by many who knew and esteemed him, and not least by his fellow-Unitarians.

MR. RICHARD BAXTER, J.P.

One of Belfast's most esteemed citizens passed away on March 27th, in the person of Mr. Richard Baxter, J.P., of "Clarence," King's Road, Knock. Mr. Baxter, who was in his 89th year, was a native of Belfast, and he took a keen pride in the city's growth and expansion. He had seen its leading thoroughfares widened and transformed, had witnessed and participated in the development of its harbour, and watched its rise from the dimensions of a provincial town into one of the foremost cities in the Empire. The second son of Mr. Richard Baxter, of Donegall Street, the deceased gentleman served his apprenticeship with Messrs. A. Henderson & Sons, steamship owners, Queen's Square, and subsequently started business as an insurance broker and coal importer. He was instrumental, as the result of a visit to Hamburg, in having electric cranes introduced to Belfast harbour, and prided himself on the fact that one of his own vessels was the first to be unloaded by that means. He was senior director of the Commercial Building Company, Ltd., and was regular in his attendance at the old Exchange Newsroom. He was also for some time a director of the Irish Shipowners' Company, Ltd., owners of the Lord Line, now merged in the Head Line. He was an enthusiastic sportsman and for about thirty years he was hon. secretary of the North Down Harriers. As a tribute to his personal worth, and also in recognition of his valuable services, the subscribers to that Hunt presented him, in September, 1906, with a silver cup; and a further compliment was paid him in June, 1912, when he was made the recipient of a silver salver. He was an intimate friend of the late Mr. James Davidson (known to everybody by his pen-name of "Nimrod"), and it is a pathetic coincidence that the two veterans, who had so much in common, should have died within a week of each other. Mr. Baxter did not take any part in public affairs, but he was a magistrate for Belfast, and every movement tending to promote the prosperity of the city met with his sympathetic support.

The funeral, which was numerously attended by representative people, took place on March 29, the services on the occasion being conducted by his minister and old friend, the Rev. J. A. Kelly, of Dunmurry.

MR. WILLIAM HUGH CHAMBERS.

The congregation of Ballee has suffered a great loss by the death of the above-named gentleman, who passed away, unmarried, on the 11th March, at his residence, The Quarter, Downpatrick, at the ripe age of 86 years. Early in life he left his home, Tullynaskeagh, and migrated to Australia, where he remained a few years, and then went to India, where he became a successful tea-planter. Over 30 years ago he returned to Ireland and took up his residence at The Quarter, which he had purchased some years previously, and here he lived in peace and comfort till the end came. He will be greatly missed by his friends and neighbours, who assembled in large numbers at his funeral, which took place on the 14th March, the services on the occasion in the house, Meeting-house, and Churchyard, being conducted by Rev. J. H. Bibby, pastor loci, and his old friend Rev. J. A. Kelly, of Dunmurry.

Women in the Pulpit.

It was my good fortune, a few weeks back, to hear Miss Hattie Baker, a Congregationalist from Plymouth, when she occupied the pulpit of the Unitarian Church at Torquay, and the congregation—at least those personally known to me—were impressed by the feeling of calm spirituality and inspiration that lay behind her words; they were not "sent empty away."

The experience set me thinking of other women I had heard, amongst them Gertrud von Petzold and Maude Royden, each bringing with them an atmosphere of spiritual uplift, holding their audience by the force of an unseen power underlying the matter of their utterance. They leave behind them the controversial element and lecturer's manner, the pulpit and the pew are drawn closer together, their hearers are helped and left with an abiding memory.

Maybe it is because women do not take up the ministry unless they feel *called* to the work, giving themselves heart and soul to it, feeling it is the work they have to do in the world forgetting all else beside, giving, sacrificing and deeming the "world well lost" if they can awaken the souls and brighten the lives of their brethren.

So far the number of women preachers is not great, women are only slowly coming into power, but the things of slow growth are the strongest. Let us hope that women will never make the ministry merely a profession, but will come into it with conviction and carry on the traditions of such pioneers as Maude Royden and Hattie Baker, that the *spirit* of religion may revive and live.

One wonders if Benjamin Kidd was prophetic when in his last book, 'The Science of Power,' he said, *men* have ruled the world so far by *brute force*, but the time is coming when *women* will rule by a better and greater power—*spiritual force*.

—E K., in *The Inquirer*.

The Rev. A. Douglas Brown said, at the annual assembly of the English Congregational Union of North Wales, that "the church was dying not of emotionalism (which he asked them not to be frightened of) "but of intellectualism. Jesus wept when he beheld the city, he did not move resolutions. The world was waiting to see if the people in the churches could love one another."

* *

The British Council for the Interchange of Preachers and Speakers between the Churches of Great Britain and America, associated with the English-Speaking Union, announce that the Rev. Dr. Jefferson, of Broadway Tabernacle, New York, is to be a special visitor to this country, May-July, this year. He will preach at the City Temple on Sundays in May and June; at Carr's Lane, Birmingham, a Sunday in June; and later in Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Bournemouth. He is a prolific writer a forceful speaker, and will certainly be a welcome visitor.

Gleanings.

We have got work to do. . . Nothing can release us from the obligation to prosecute that work to its accomplishment.

* *

The end of labour is to gain leisure.

* *

Read Nature. Nature is a friend to truth.

* *

Manual labour is the study of the external world. The advantage of riches remains with him who procured them, not with the heir.

* *

God never put one man or one woman into the world without giving each something to do in it, or for it—some visible, tangible work, to be left behind them when they die.

* *

The burden of suffering seems a tombstone hung about our necks, while in reality it is only the weight which is necessary to keep down the diver while he is hunting for pearls.

—*Richter.*

O Thou from whom all life doth flow,
In whom doth life begin,
Make all our deeds with life to glow;
Be nothing dead but sin!

Be Thou in us the life to will,
The eager life to do;
Thy life through all our living thrill,
And still our life renew

Till life goes on by lifes increase
To fuller life above;
Where life is light and joy and peace;
And, best of all, is love.

Significance of Christ's Sufferings.

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.—Heb. ii. 10.

"It is not every sort of suffering that trains the souls of men. Simple suffering, taken by itself, has never any such educating power; it gets it only by the strength of some end or purpose that is discovered in it. The man who has suffered much, and yet who knows nothing of suffering but its pain, is hard and not soft; is selfish, querulous, ungrateful. The blows have beaten his outer nature into a crust to keep the inner life more than ever a prisoner, instead of breaking the outer life to let the inner life forth.

What, then, must we put into suffering to make it a true means of education Two things: First, hearty and cordial submission to another's will. Look at the child who patiently submits because his father says not, "You must," but "It is well you should." Look at the men and women everywhere who have no question after they have found out what God's will is, who simply go and do it, in whatever pain, because they know it must be right and best that His will should be done. In all such cases, where suffering comes out of willing submission to a superior and trusted will, it brings the sufferer into sympathy with the purpose of that will, it demands spiritual enterprise and faith, and so it calls out the better life and educates the soul.

There is another thing which you must add to suffering to make it a means of perfection. It must be the suffering not merely of faith, but of love. No man grows the best by what he suffers only for himself. There is not half as much spiritual culture in the pain of fever that tosses on a sick bed, submissive as it may be to God, as in the pain of sleeplessness and anxiety that watches by its side and not merely submits to God, but suffers for love of a fellow man. All the highest and most educating suffering of the world has been vicarious. It has been the suffering which the sufferer was in no way bound to bear, save as Jesus was bound to die for our sins, "for the great love wherewith he loved us."

Put both of these elements in, and then you have the perfect and the perfecting suffering. This is what makes sick-rooms sweet and martyrdoms glorious. The life is not hardened and crusted by the hammer of agony, but broken for the escape of its better and more spiritual portion by the buoyant and elastic blows.

In all the sufferings of Jesus both these elements supremely met.

It is idle to talk of suffering as if it were the privilege of a few select lives only. Suffering and its culture, like joy and its culture, are within the lot of every man. He lives unworthily whose nature never clashes against the lower natures, and suffers pain. But mere pain is not education, does not bring growth. It is the suffering of willing submission to God and of self-sacrificing love for fellow-men that softens and spiritualizes and blesses us. In all such suffering let us rejoice. We shall not need to seek, opportunities enough for it will meet us everywhere. And may God help us everywhere to find the treasures they contain."

—*Phillips Brooks.*

Miss Rosamond Praeger.

In a recent number of *The Inquirer* appeared an interesting illustrated article dealing with the work of Miss Praeger. As it has a special interest for North of Ireland persons, we make the following excerpts for the benefit of our readers:—

"Probably Miss Rosamond Praeger is best known to the world at large as the sculptor of the attractive figure of a young child, which is entitled 'The Philosopher.' Innumerable casts of this figure are to be seen in art shops and in private houses, though the original has now gone to the United States of America, with so many other artistic treasures. But 'The Philosopher' is only the best known of Miss Praeger's creative work, and some further information about her will be of special interest to readers of *The Inquirer*.

Rosamond Praeger belongs to the North of Ireland. There she was born in Holywood, Co. Down, eight or ten miles from Belfast, and there she has lived. Her paternal grandfather was a Dutchman, her surname (pronounced 'prayger,' with *g* hard) thus coming from the Low Countries, but she has far more Irish blood in her than Dutch, her mother being a Miss Patterson (daughter of Mr. R. Patterson, F.R.S.) before marriage, and both her parents were lifelong and prominent members

of the Unitarian Church at Holywood of which the Rev. C. J. McAlester was minister for fifty years and of which church she likewise is a member. Of course the Church calls itself, not Unitarian, but Non-Subscribing Presbyterian. Mr. McAlester for many years held a day school in the rooms attached to the church, and at that school Miss Praeger was educated.

She has her main studio in Holywood, though she now often works at an improvised studio attached to the house at the little village of Cultra, a mile or two beyond Holywood, where she lives with her mother. Sometimes she comes over to a London studio to finish some piece of work under different conditions of light, and thus she is working at present upon the beautiful pair of little figures of which we are able to publish an early photograph in their still unfinished state. If Miss Praeger can complete the work in time, the original may perhaps be seen at the Royal Academy this year.

Miss Praeger studied at the Slade School in London, her first idea being to draw crayon portraits; but while studying she took to modelling, and sculpture has been her serious life work. The first piece of sculpture from her hand of which we have a clear remembrance was called 'The Sunday Child,' a title derived from the folklore saying 'The Sunday child sees the fairies.' Well do we remember coming upon the beautiful little figure of a child looking down at a tiny fairy perched like a butterfly on its finger. This must have been twenty-five years ago, but it was not the first piece of sculpture by Miss Praeger which had been exhibited at the Royal Academy. Later came 'The Waif,' the figure of a lost little girl holding some flowers to her breast, exhibited at the Royal Academy, and the Paris Salon—and 'The Philosopher,' exhibited at the Royal Academy. Miss Praeger has also executed a number of reliefs, one, particularly dainty, representing the dancing of a reel by four girls, while a small boy sits on the ground piping.

In intervals between more serious work Miss Praeger has written and illustrated more than a dozen charming children's books, two amongst the best known being entitled 'The Three Bold Babes' and 'A Picture Grammar.'

Since the war Miss Praeger has been in great request for the design and execution of war memorials in and around Belfast. For the Rosemary Street Church, Belfast, the Unitarian Church known as 'The First House,' she has designed and carved an ideal figure with a banner, representing Heroic Youth, to which she appended the verse, 'Be of good courage and let us play the men for our people, and the Lord do as seemeth Him good.' So she read the spirit in which our young men, one of her brothers amongst them, went to the War. Several more of our churches in the North of Ireland have had their war memorials from Miss Praeger's hands, and not our churches only. The war memorial of the Bushmills' Parish Church is her work. So is the frieze which forms the war memorial of Workman and Clarke's Shipyard, and the figures, two boy angels and two boy knights, in Messrs. Young & Mackenzie's design for the Campbell College war memorial at Belfast, are also hers. The piece upon which she is now engaged has all the beauty and poetry which characterise her designs. She entitles it "These Little Ones."

Lesson Notes.

2nd April. SAMUEL—The Statesman. I. Sam. xv. 1-31. Key Text, I. Sam. xv. 22b.

Samuel was a priest, a judge, a seer, and a statesman. He was consecrated to the service of the temple of Shiloh (see last lesson) in childhood in the days of Eli whom he succeeded in the priest's office (I. Sam. i-iii). Like others of the "judges" (26th Feb.—1st par.), he laboured to preserve the purity of the Israelitish worship and to deliver the Israelites from the hands of aliens (I. Sam. vii.). As a seer he was credited with ability to guide the conduct of others by means of supernatural knowledge of things about to happen to them (*e.g.*, I. Sam. x. 1-9). Stories of that kind are incredible for ordinary modern minds. They arose from the probably deserved reputation of Samuel for uncommon sagacity which to people in his day seemed uncanny. The place of seers in Israel came to be taken by a superior class of men of keen political and moral discernment who were called prophets (ix. 9). The sons of Samuel proved unworthy of him; and when there appeared no one else fit to occupy the position of judge in case of national emergency, the people desired to be ruled over by a king endowed with the more complete authority and higher powers of a more generally recognised head. Samuel, who was strongly conservative, nevertheless, like a true statesman, waived his opposition in the face of overwhelming popular tendency, using his influence to secure that the man promoted to the royal office should be, so far as he was concerned, one properly qualified for the same (vii, ix. xv.).

(I. Sam. xv.) (1) Anoint—To smear with oil, or to pour oil upon the head; often, as a ceremony in token of consecration for high office. (2) See Ex. xvii. 8-16. (12) Not Mt. Carmel on the coast, but a place some 25 miles south wards of Jerusalem. (18) See 19th February—last par. (22) Cp. Hos. vi. 6, Mt. ix. 13, xii. 7, also Mi. vi. 6-8. (23) *Teraphim* were some kind of images connected with divination, held by spiritual Israelites to be incompatible with the pure worship of Yahweh.

9th April. REVISION.

16th April. EASTER LESSON—The Resurrection. Luke xxiv. 1-35. Key Text, I. Cor. xv. 12.

Easter Day is the Sunday commemorating that upon which the disciples of Jesus became aware of His resurrection from the dead (Mt. xxviii. 1, etc., Mk. xvi. 2 etc., Lk. xxiv, 1 etc.). It is the first Sunday which occurs after the full moon which happens upon or after 21st March (the date of the vernal equinox, at which day and night are of equal length). It may be therefore as early as 22nd March or as late as 25th April. The Friday before Easter Day is called Good Friday or Holy Friday, being the day commemorating that of the Crucifixion. The commemoration of the Resurrection is rendered particularly impressive by the Easter ceremony of the Russian Churches. At the midnight Mass at St. Isaac's (Petrograd) on Easter Day the cathedral is at first left in total darkness until the first stroke of Twelve o'clock. Then the Metropolitan announces in a loud voice, "Christ is risen!" At an electric signal given from the cathedral, great guns are fired off at the neighbouring fortress; whilst by means of a simple device tens of thousands of candles are rapidly kindled, outlining the arches, cornices and other architectural features of the church. As the congregation goes forth into the streets, they greet whomsoever they meet with the tidings, "Christ is risen!" and are answered with the words, "He is risen indeed!"

The truth underlying the legends of the empty tomb and the visibility of Jesus risen, is the conviction borne in upon the minds of the disciples, derived principally from reflections upon the deep impression of lovability and holiness which Jesus in the flesh had made upon them, that being dead in respect of the earthly part of him, He must still be alive in the spirit; since, owing to the infinite love of God for His earthly children, though dead, "All live unto Him" (Lk. xx. 38b.). His passion, followed by His Resur-

rection, soon came to be believed to be in agreement with scriptural prophecy (Lk. xxiv. 25-26—referring to Is. liii. 3-12 and Ps. xxii. 6-8 ; 1 13-18).

23rd April. THE BEATITUDES. I.—The Poor in Spirit. Ps. li. Key Text, Mt. v. 3.

(Ps. li. (4) Acknowledgement of (*a*) guilt, (*b*) justness of the divine verdict and sentence whatever the latter might be. (*b*) He belongs to a sinful race, which is one reason (though not alleged as an excuse) why he is a sinner himself. (6) God requires utter truthfulness of utterance ; and utter acknowledgement of the truth in one's mind : he is displeased with the practice of self-deception. (7) *Hyssop*—Some common herb of Palestine growing upon walls. (8) Broken bones are a figure for the sense of having been in tribulation (*i.e.*, crushing), from the oppressive sense of guilt under the displeasure of God. (12) "Salvation" from sin ;and thence a feeling of spiritual healthiness and contentment. *A free spirit* —a disposition to do right from the love of doing it. (17) Lowliness of heart, incompatible with self-complacence and unwillingness to admit one's shortcomings and wrong doings, is the condition of pleasing God, and of finding pleasure in Him. Cp. Is. xxix. 19—"The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel." Also Is. lxvi. 2b.— But to this man will I look, even to Him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at My word."

Mt. v. 3. Cp. Lk. vi. 20b. According to Luke the poor must have compensation for their poverty, and the best God can bestow upon them is His Kingdom for a possession ; as if there were a virtue in being unfortunate in mundane affairs, so that they were bound to be rewarded (Cp. Story of Rich Man and Lazarus—Lk. xvi. 19-31). As a matter of fact it is not necessarily those who are poor in respect to earthly possessions who are universally or conspicuously free from repining against God, and especially devoted to His service. It is true to say, however, that possession of wealth in proportion as it makes wealthy people self-satifised, makes them less disposed to look for satisfaction in humble service of the Most High.

30th April. THE BEATITUDES. II.—The Mourners. Is. lxi. Key Text Mt. v. 4.

(Is. lxi.) The prophet refers to the captivity of his compatriots (Israelites) in Babylon, the penalty (according to his view) of past national delinquency. He foretells the succession of divine pardon to divine punishment. (1) God has inspired me, having (figuratively) anointed me (see 2nd Apl.—last par.) to hearten the captives with the prospect of restored liberty. (2) Though the captors have been instrument of the divine punishment, the prophet regards them as enemies of Yahweh's beloved Israelites, therefore, the reversal of their action as an act of vengeance. (3) "All that mourn"—for the sins, and consequently lamentable plight, of Israel. "Ashes" (figuratively speaking) cast upon the head in token of mourning. "Trees" bearing the fruits of righteousness, planted by God for His glory. (4) Referring to the destruction and havoc wrought by the conquering Babylonians. (5, 6) They will be so held in honour as teachers of true religion by people of other nationalities that they will gladly toil for and enrich them. (7) The fact of having suffered divine punishment is even to be regarded as calling for divine compensation ! (8) This punishment at the hands of their enemies (by the divine will) is now to be regarded by God Himself as a *wrong* endured by them. (9) Other nations will recognise that they are under special divine favour.

In Mt. v. 4, the persons referred to are they who mourn for the sins of Israel which prevent the coming of the Kingdom.

To correspond with Mt. v. 4 we have Lk. vi. 21b referring (from another point of view) to those who are miserable *now* on any account whatever (provided it be not their own sinfulness), who are regarded as objects for divine commiseration and therefore bound to be divinely recompensed in a time to come. (Cp. 23rd April—2nd par.).

Reports.

Belfast: First Church.—The Sunday School Party and Prize-giving was held in the Central Hall, on March 3rd. In the absence of the minister, owing to domestic sickness, the chair was taken by Mr. C. J. M'Kisack, who was supported by Mr. Robert M'Crum, the superintendent. The proceedings began with tea, served by the Misses Hall and Hewitt and the elder scholars. There was a large attendance of scholars, and their parents and friends, who assembled in goodly numbers. A miscellaneous programme of musical items, together with recitations, prepared for the chief item of the entertainment, "The Little Blue Bell," a pretty play which had been very carefully prepared by Miss Hewitt and Miss Hall, and whose presentation reflected not only great credit upon them but also upon the large band of scholars taking part therein. Certainly it proved very successful. The prizes were distributed by Mr. M'Kisack, who prefaced his duty in that respect by a very helpful and appropriate address to the scholars. Later the elder ones stayed on for an enjoyable dance, and this brought a successful gathering to a close. On March 29th the concluding social, arranged by the elder scholars, took place in the Central Hall, and proved as enjoyable as its predecessors had done. There was again a good attendance, and the tea served by Miss Hall was an enjoyable prelude to the dancing and round games which formed the main part of the programme. The enjoyment increased as the evening progressed, and but for the Curfew and the necessity of catching trams, "We won't go home till morning" would have evoked a ready response from most of those present. A welcome surprise came towards the end of the evening in the form of fruit jelly and cakes, most acceptable to the dancers, and not disdained by those whose chief pleasure consisted in watching and admiring the inexhaustible energy of their younger friends. If these social evenings be continued next winter, we predict a great support and a marked success for the same.

Belfast: Unity Guild.—The Unity Guild Entertainment for the members of the Domestic Mission took place on Saturday, January 28th, in the Stanhope Street Hall, when a most enjoyable evening was spent. Tea was served to a company of 70, after which a varied programme was contributed by the following Guild members and friends:—Mrs. E. R. Jackson, The Misses F. Newman, D. Young, M. Martin, A. Montgomery, V. Donaldson, Nellie Gordon, Rhona Harvey, Mildred Martin, and Eileen Millar, Rev. M. Watkins and Mr. J. H. Smith. In the Central Hall, on Wednesday, February 8th, the Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., delivered a very interesting Lecture entitled: "The Soul: Its Adventures and Destiny," a synopsis of which has already appeared in these pages. It is very regrettable that the attendance on this occasion was so small. Tea was served at the conclusion of the Lecture and was followed by a guessing competition. The Book Prize was won by Mrs. Johnson. The Dramatic Entertainment took place on Wednesday, March 8th, in Rosemary Hall, and two plays, entitled: "Uncle Ben," and "The Bath Room Door" were produced by Mrs. E. R. Jackson. The cast for the plays included the following: Mrs. Robinson, The Misses Edith Malcolm, Florrie Newman, Dorothy Newman, Dorothy Young, May Hall, Ara Montgomery, and Madge Meneely, Messrs. R. Martin, W. H. M'Cafferty, H. Erskine, H. Allen, J. Uprichard, and — M'Dade, Tableaux also formed part of this programme and thus afforded an opportunity to many of the young people in the Sunday Schools of assisting in the work of the Guild. The contributors to this part of the programme were: The Misses Maisie Martin, Nellie M'Manus, Evelyn Wilkinson, Nora Martin, Mabel Young, Ethel Martin, Nellie Gordon, Eileen Millar, Mildred Martin, Dorothy Newman, Kathleen Young, Rhona Harvey, Violet Martin, Mildred Graham, Madge and Etta Kirkpatrick, Eileen and Barbara Henderson and Evelyn Morton, Masters Kenneth Robinson, Cecil Allen, Tom M'Cartney. The Annual Meeting will be held in Mountpottinger School-

room on Wednesday, April 12th, at 7-30 p.m.

* *

Unity Guild Dramatic Entertainment

A little more rehearsal would have done no harm to the company which took part in the Guild's production of "Uncle Ben." Indeed, it seemed as though only two of them were anything like word perfect and they were handicapped "getting away" with their parts, by the others. Apart from this, the production was up to the Guild's standard of excellence, the setting and dresses leaving nothing to be desired. Mr. R. Martin in the title role and Miss E. Malcolm as the Landlady were both in their element, while Mrs. Robinson played MRS. PODDLES with great spirit. Mr. Uprichard took MONTY, who is forced to find a temporary wife during his uncle's visit. He persuades his chum to adopt female attire and impersonate the lady, with amusing results. Mr. M'Dade took upon himself this chum's part and, with the reservation mentioned at the start, entered heartily into the spirit of the thing. Although Misses F. Newman and D. Young had not a great deal to do, they played the parts of the young men's fiancees very gracefully. The play itself was a good choice, though the ending struck one as rather weak.

It is a pity that having gone the length of making three doors the Guild did not go further and build an entire scene for their production of the "Bathroom Door," as the curtain formed somewhat unconvincing walls for the hotel corridor. Miss Ara Montgomery was particularly happy in her presentation of the Elderly Lady, and Mr. Erskine excelled himself as the Young Man; we have never seen either of the two to better advantage. Mr. W. H. M'Cafferty is new to the Guild's dramatic shows, and amply justified his selection for the part of the Elderly Gentleman, which he played in the right spirit of fierce impatience. Miss Meneely made a very self-possessed Young Lady, and carried her part through with the utmost unconcern. Miss Hall made a very pretty Prima Donna in her tasteful dressing gown, and played this exacting part modestly and well. Mr. H. Allen made a perfect Boots, our only wish being that he had had more to do. The entire company worked well together and made quite a success of this neat little sketch.

The interval between the plays was occupied by Tableaux representing "The Old Woman in the Shoe," "Ceres and the Seasons," and "Titania's Dream." Had they been taken in this order it would have been a great improvement as it is always advisable to keep the best to the last and the last-mentioned was undoubtedly the most effective and the prettiest, though the others were also quite good.

Cairncastle.—The Annual Meeting of the congregation was held in the schoolroom, on February 9th, when there was a good attendance and a most enjoyable evening was spent. After tea the Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were read, the latter showing a balance in hand, and a report was also given of the Sunday School. The rest of the evening was spent in dancing, games and competitions, and the minister gave a reading. After some more refreshments and the singing of "Auld Lang Syne," the meeting broke up about 12-30. The following evening the minister and his wife gave their annual party to the children of the congregation and every one seemed to enjoy it. All kinds of games were played and one little girl danced, while there were several songs to wind up the party. It was a beautiful fine night with good moonlight to show the way home. The party broke up about 8-30, having began at 4 p.m.

* *

Clough.—The Sunday Scholars' Party took place on Friday Evening, February 3rd. Mr. and Mrs. J. M'Cammon, who are deeply interested in the Sunday School, with their usual generosity presented the children with handsome books. A most enjoyable tea was kindly provided by Mrs. Davies and Miss Irvine, who presided at the tables. After refreshment, the adjudication of the Prize Essays was given, the winners being (1) Master Jim Hay, Lodge Hill; (2) Miss L. Robinson, Summerhill. The children thoroughly enjoyed a Lantern Lecture given by the minister, about 50

slides illustrating a trip from London to Niagara Falls. There were also shown some humorous slides which were greatly appreciated by the juniors. The Lantern and Humorous Slides were kindly lent by Rev. R. Philipson. A Presentation Party was held in Greenwood, the residence of Mr. and Mrs. H. Maffett, on the following Thursday Evening, when members of the congregation and other friends were present. The honoured guests of the evening were Mr. and Mrs. Neill, of Guiness, who, with their family, are about to sail for Australia. As a token of regard and appreciation of Mr. and Mrs. Neill, a sum of over £100 was subscribed by their friends and presented to them The presentation was made by Rev. J. D. Davies. Mr. and Mrs. Maffett hospitably entertained all friends present Apologies were received from Major Ker, Mr. Henderson, Mr. H. M'Cammon, and Mr. J. M'Cammon.

* *

Dromore.—There was a good attendance of members at the last monthly meeting of the Young People's Social Union on Thursday, February 23rd, when a paper was given by Mr. W. J. Baxter, B.A., entitled "*England's Gift to the Nations.*" After a rapid sketch of the rise of freedom in the early Greek States, and its subsequent fortunes in the Roman Empire, its more modern aspects were dwelt upon particularly as regards the Reformation in the 16th century, and the struggle for freedom, which Cromwell brought to a successful end in the 17th century. An interesting comparison was made betwen England and Germany, and the position of each in relation to Freedom, previous to the Great War, shewing how the doctrine of divine right and autocratic power which the German Emperor maintained, and the German people tolerated, was abolished by the English people three centuries ago. The provision of a number of excellent maps gave greatly enhanced interest to the paper, and at the conclusion thereof, on the motion of the President of the Society, seconded by Mr. Wm. Bailie. Mr. Baxter was heartily thanked for what, as one member put it, and as all felt, was an exceedingly stimulating "talk" of some two hours duration, rather than a formal set paper. Grateful mention was also made of the sympathetic interest which Mr. Baxter has always taken in the work of the Social Union. In addition to the regular monthly meetings of the Union, it is pleasant to record that several other successful gatherings have been held within the past two or three months. On the occasion of a social evening, organised by the members of the choir, Mrs. Ruddock, our esteemed organist, was made the recipient of a gold wristlet watch, in token of their warm affection, the presentation being made by Mrs. Mulligan. At the Scholars' Party and Prize Distribution, on Thursday, March 9th, there was an assemblage of upwards of 130 scholars. An interesting programme was gone through, and the minister, who presided, expressed his gratification at the large increase in the number of books awarded as compared with the previous year. By resolution of Committee a Congregational Re-union was held on Thursday evening, March 16th. Tea was served to a large company. In the course of his opening remarks the chairman (Mr. Davison) said that a word of apology was due from him to the Committee because, when the question of a soiree was being talked about, he had hinted that soirees had ceased to have any attraction for the people, and, that if one was held, they would be disappointed from the point of view of numbers. He was glad to find that he had been mistaken, for he had never seen a finer house, and remarked that if he had congregations like it on Sunday it would be in all the papers on Monday morning. The entire programme was given by the young people of the Sunday School, and others connected with the congregation, under the direction of Mrs. Mulligan and Mrs. Ruddock, and the various items won warm appreciation.

* *

Holywood.—On Tuesday, March 2nd, the Rev. Edgar I. Fripp, B.A., gave a lecture on "Florence," illustrated by beautiful lantern slides, to the members of the Church Guild.

There was a good attendance. The lecture was thoroughly enjoyed, and at the close a very hearty vote of thanks was accorded to the lecturer and the lanternist (Mr. Miller, of Belfast), and also to the chairman, Mr. W. Patterson. On Sunday, March 26, collections were made for the Russian Famine Fund, which amounted to £31.

* *

Mountpottinger.—On March 9th the Choir held a very successful competition in the School-room, which was well attended, and thus achieved its object of assisting the music fund. A Concert has been arranged by the Choir with a view to helping the same object, and a report of this will appear in our next issue. On the night of St. Patrick's Day the fourth of the series of Congregational Socials was held in the School-room and attracted a large attendance, which will mean a certain welcome addition to the renovation fund. The Sunday School scholars with the assistance of certain members of the Choir who have passed from the School, have been busy practising for the Musical Festival to be held at Easter, and they give fair promise of proving that the efforts of our minister as conductor have been well appreciated and understood.

* *

STANHOPE STREET MISSION

The Annual Meeting of the Belfast Domestic Mission (Stanhope Street) was held on March 13th, in the Central Hall, Rosemary Street, Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., presiding over a large attendance of friends and subscribers.

The Hon. Secretary (Rev. M. Watkins) submitted the Committee's report, which stated that the Mission continued its career of usefulness under the leadership of the able missionary, Mr. J. Harold Smith, and that in spite of the exceedingly trying times experienced in the Stanhope Street area during the year. To Mr. Smith their warmest thanks were given for his splendid work, especially for the inestimable services he rendered in the homes of the people. The Mission Funds benefited by a substantial bequest of £98 from the estate of the late Miss Hayes, and a generous donation of £25 from Mrs. Matthews, of Bangor. The Committee again appeal to the members of their churches and friends for new and increased subscriptions, and also for workers to enable the Mission to fulfil its essential and religious work amongst the poor of the city.

The Provident Fund Report, which disclosed a satisfactory balance, was submitted by Mr. Hugh Erskine, and the Hon. Treasurer (Mr. J. Mackenzie) presented the Statement of Accounts, which showed a balance in hands.

Mr. J. Harold Smith, Missionary, in the course of a report which reviewed the activities of the Mission during the year, said it had been a year of trial and difficulty, Oftentimes their hearts were filled with sadness as they learned of the awful deeds perpetrated in their midst. There were those in their own community who had lost dear ones directly or indirectly as the result of the abnormal and regrettable events which had occurred. On several occasions those present at the Mission Meetings attended at grave risk. Through it all their people were most devoted and courageous. The attendances were well maintained, the averages exceeding those of last year. Sunday, the 10th July, was a memorable day to all. Their mission area was the centre of great activity. Houses had been burned down in Antrim Street, leaving several families homeless. Their furniture was collected and piled up in the streets. Ultimately, at nightfall, the Mission premises were broken open and used as a general store. On the following morning, after consulting the authorities, he decided to allow the furniture to remain until such times as other accommodation was available. The situation was a peculiar one, and by taking a course of helpfulness rather than aggressiveness what might have been a distinctly unpleasant result proved a most favourable one. The premises were ultimately cleared and were subsequently opened.

The Chairman expressed regret that Mr. Hugh Erskine, who had been associated with the work of the Provident Fund, had to give that work up because of his impending departure to England. More collectors were required to carry on the work of the fund. The Mission was in the financial position that it was at present because it had not been forgotten by some whom it had helped

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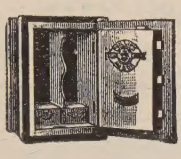

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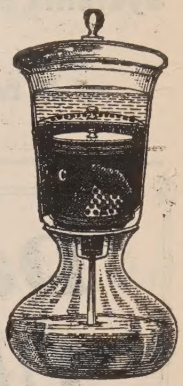

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in time past, and who had shown their gratitude by generously helping the Mission. It was to be hoped that others would come forward to assist them. A good deal of expenditure last year had been due to the troubles which had been so prevalent in the neighbourhood in which the Mission was situated, as wire guards had been provided for the windows, which had been so often broken. Notwithstanding the generous bequest and donation they had only a very small credit balance, and if they were to keep the Mission healthy, vigorous, and flourishing they required more annual subscribers. Having paid a tribute to the work of the officers, the Chairman expressed the hope that they were in for better times for the city, the mission, and the country.

The motion was seconded by Rev. A. O. Ashworth and passed.

The Chairman, in moving a vote of thanks to Mr. Smith, Missionary, for his faithful services, said no Missionary in the history of their Mission, which had been inaugurated in 1853, had had more abnormal conditions to encounter than Mr. Harold Smith, and they ought to remember that it was his first post of the kind. Practically all the time he had been here the conditions had not been normal in their city. Unfortunately the very centre in which their Mission existed had been perhaps the worst behaved of all the districts in Belfast.

The motion was seconded by Miss M'Alester and passed.

On the motion of Mr. R. M'Crum, seconded by Mrs. Jackson, the members of the General Committee were re-elected, with the addition of the name of Rev. E. I. Fripp, B.A., also the members of the ladies' Committee.

A vote of thanks was accorded the Rev. Lawrence Redfern (Liverpool) for preaching the annual sermons, on the motion of Mr. Charles M'Kisack, seconded by Mr. R. Martin.

Rev. L. Redfern, replying, said the Domestic Mission idea was one of the greatest forces for the uplifting of social life that one could find anywhere in human society. They were trying to enlist in the service of religion the mind and heart and will. They were ready to welcome truth from whatever quarter it might come, and there was nothing finer in their tradition than the way the people who occupied their pews had guarded that freedom of thought with a vigilant and Godly care.

Votes of thanks to the voluntary workers and the chairman were passed, and the meeting concluded with the pronouncing of the Benediction.

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